

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 48-50, 52, 55, 56, 58 and 60-62, as follows. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending in this application have been reproduced below:

1-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus for exposing a wafer to a pattern, said apparatus comprising:

a chamber in which an atmosphere is conditioned to be different from an atmosphere in another apparatus outside of said exposure apparatus and the wafer is exposed to the pattern, the atmosphere in said chamber being purged with an inert gas; and

a port section through which the wafer is transferred between said chamber and the other apparatus, said port section having a load-lock mechanism including a vacuum mechanism for creating a vacuum below atmospheric pressure inside of said port section and a supply mechanism for supplying the inert gas to the inside of said port section ~~so that an atmosphere in said port section is substantially the same as the atmosphere in said chamber.~~

49. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein said exposure apparatus ~~includes~~ comprises a plurality of said port sections.

50. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 49, wherein said plurality of port sections include comprises a first port section for loading the wafer and a second port section for unloading the wafer.

51. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 48, further comprising an interface section for stocking a wafer between said port section and the other apparatus.

52. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 51, wherein said interface section includes comprises a load-lock mechanism.

53. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 51, wherein said interface section is shared by a plurality of said port sections.

54. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein the other apparatus includes a coating/developing system.

55. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein said port section includes comprises a temperature control mechanism for controlling a temperature of the wafer.

56. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said temperature control mechanism includes comprises at least one of a heater and a cooler.

57. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said load-lock mechanism and said temperature control mechanism operate in parallel with each other.

58. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 48, wherein said chamber ~~includes~~ comprises a temperature control mechanism for controlling a temperature of the wafer.

59. (Cancelled)

60. (Currently Amended) A ~~device manufacturing system~~ for manufacturing a device, ~~said system~~ comprising:

an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 48, for exposing a wafer, in which the device is to be manufactured, to a pattern; and
another apparatus which performs, for [[a]] the wafer, at least one of a pre-process and a post-process with respect to an exposure process ~~to be~~ performed by said exposure apparatus.

61. (Currently Amended) A ~~device manufacturing method~~ of manufacturing a device, ~~said method~~ comprising steps of:

exposing a wafer to a pattern using an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 48;
and
developing the exposed wafer; and
processing the developed wafer to manufacture the device.

62. (Currently Amended) A ~~device manufacturing method of manufacturing a device,~~
said method comprising:

a step of processing a wafer using a ~~device manufacturing system~~ as defined in
claim 60.